



OFFICE OF THE DEAN

UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES  
F. EDWARD HEBERT SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
4301 JONES BRIDGE ROAD  
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20814-4799  
<http://www.usuhs.mil>



Office of the Dean  
School of Medicine  
SOM-DPM-004-07  
October 10, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR FACULTY, STAFF, AND MEDICAL STUDENTS

SUBJECT: Academic Counseling Program

A. **Purpose.** This memorandum reissues School of Medicine (SOM), Dean's Policy Memoranda (DPM) SOM-DPM-004-93<sup>a</sup>, "Academic Counseling Program," dated December 13, 1993 (hereby canceled), and establishes policy and procedures regarding academic counseling for medical students.

B. **References.** See *Enclosure 1*.

C. **Applicability.** This memorandum applies to the undergraduate medical education program of the SOM.


D. **Definitions.** See *Enclosure 2*.

E. **Policy.**

1. The Dean, SOM, academic department chairs, and course/clerkship directors are responsible for the design and implementation of a system for evaluating the academic performance of each student. Monitoring occurs as students progress through each course/clerkship, enabling early identification of those students having academic difficulty so that action plans are developed to facilitate each student's academic success.

2. Upon entering the medical school curriculum, some students may need professional assistance in assessing their study skills and refining them to meet the specific academic demands of the program. The Office for Student Affairs has primary oversight of this process. The Office for Student Affairs, in conjunction with academic departments and faculty advisors, provides an active Academic Counseling Program to support medical students throughout the four-year curriculum.

F. **Procedures.** *See Enclosure 3.*



Larry W. Laughlin, M.D., Ph.D.  
Dean, School of Medicine

Enclosures:

1. References
2. Definitions
3. Procedures

**REFERENCES**

- (a) DPM-SOM-004-93, "Academic Counseling Program," dated December 13, 1993 (hereby canceled)
- (b) USUHS Instruction 1201, "Student Promotions Committee," dated December 19, 2005
- (c) USUHS Instruction 1105, "Grades and Grading Policies and Procedures," dated December 19, 2005

## DEFINITIONS

- A. Deficient academic performance: Deficient academic performance is defined as failure to maintain a course or clerkship grade of C, failure to receive a letter grade of C or better in any course or clerkship examination or as a final course or clerkship grade, or failure of Step 1 or Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) or Clinical Skills (CS) of the United States Medical Licensing Examination.
- B. Academic probation. A formal administrative action taken by the Dean, SOM, upon recommendation of the Student Promotions Committee (SPC) which describes the academic standing of a student whose academic performance is deficient. Conditions for academic review by the SPC and placement on Academic Probation are set forth in USUHS Instruction 1201<sup>b</sup>, "Student Promotions Committee."
- C. Academic standing. The individual student's academic standing is determined by criteria set forth in USUHS Instruction 1105<sup>c</sup>, "Grades and Grading Policies and Procedures."

## PROCEDURES

1. A formal process is maintained by the Dean, SOM, for assisting students at risk for experiencing academic difficulty. This process includes the early identification of such students coupled with the timely provision of services designed to assist them in successfully meeting all academic requirements. The Office for Student Affairs has responsibility for administering and implementing this process.

2. Department Chairs will promptly notify the Office for Student Affairs of any students maintaining less than a C average at the midpoint of each course/clerkship. Department Chairs will ensure that students referred by the Office for Student Affairs for academic assistance receive timely and appropriate instruction in the area(s) of their deficiency.

3. The Office for Student Affairs will review the academic performance of each student: (1) following the administration of each course/clerkship examination; (2) at the midpoint and conclusion of each course/clerkship; and (3) following administration of the United States Medical Licensing Examinations, Step 1 and Step 2 CK and CS. Students identified as deficient in academic performance will be offered academic counseling. Students who receive a formal review by the SPC for academic deficiency and placed on Academic Probation will be entered into the Academic Counseling Program. In addition, the Office for Student Affairs ensures that academic counseling services are made available to all medical students, regardless of their academic standing.

4. A record of academic counseling is maintained in the Office for Student Affairs on each student in the Academic Counseling Program. The file serves to document services provided and student progress. Files are secured to ensure confidentiality and are destroyed following the student's graduation or disenrollment from the SOM.

### a. Course Performance

(1) The Associate Dean for Student Affairs (ADSA) will review student performance through regularly scheduled meetings with course directors. The Assistant Dean for Academic Support Services (ADASS) will review course interim and final grades as soon as available and identify students with deficient academic performance.

(2) The ADASS must ensure that each student with deficient academic performance is afforded academic counseling to:

- (a) assess the reason(s) for poor performance;
- (b) establish a plan of action for overcoming deficiencies; and

(c) make any appropriate referrals

(3) The ADASS regularly monitors the progress of students receiving academic counseling and reports progress to the ADSA. Students who are placed on Academic Probation will continue in the Academic Counseling Program until being formally removed from Academic Probation or as recommended by the ADSA.

b. Clerkship Performance

(1) The Assistant Dean for Clinical Sciences (ADCS) meets at least every six weeks with clerkship directors to discuss student performance throughout the third and fourth years. In addition, the ADCS reviews clerkship interim assessments and all final clerkship evaluations and identifies students with deficient academic performance.

(2) The ADCS ensures that each student with deficient academic performance is afforded academic counseling to:

- (a) assess the reason(s) for poor performance;
- (b) establish a plan of action for overcoming deficiencies; and
- (c) make any appropriate referrals.

(3) The ADCS regularly monitors the progress of students receiving academic counseling and reports progress to the ADSA. Students who are placed on Academic Probation will continue in the Academic Counseling Program until being formally removed from Academic Probation or as recommended by the ADSA.

c. United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE)

(1) The ADSA and ADCS review USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 CK & CS scores upon receipt of examination performance reports. Each student failing the examination meets with the ADSA, ADASS or the ADCS to determine a plan of action to facilitate the student's earning a passing score upon re-examination.

(2) The ADSA ensures that each student failing the examination develops a specific study plan in preparation for retaking the examination.

d. Academic Counseling Services

(1) The ADSA ensures that academic counseling services are made available to all students, regardless of academic standing. Such services may be provided to students individually or in groups, and may be accomplished with the assistance of the ADME, Student Mental Health, class academic representatives, and other resources as deemed appropriate by the ADSA.

(2) Academic counseling services are designed to assist students in the successful completion of academic requirements in courses, clerkships, and the USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 CK & CS.